

THE
FREE LANCE

VOLUME 2

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THE FREE LANCE

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TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE — 1803

The amaryllis lilies Josephine brought up
From Martinique spike thru this winter's gloom.
Napoleon and his ministers range down
Malmaison's halls, not stopping at the bloom.
The scarlet roaring flames of flower heads
That shatter the pink damask and the white
Sheer muslin.

In a prison, while the tyrant strides
Praying of Empire, Toussaint in ankled mire
Longs for the sun and torched flamboyant trees.
All winter the Black Liberator lingers
Heartsick and cold, remembering flowers of fire
And freedom rocketing in Western skies
And this white prince who lies.
So when the spring sends out her first thin fingers,
He turns upon his cot, and coughs
And dies.

—Adelaide Simon

WHEN PLAYED BY SILAS LANHAM

The fiddle when played by Silas Lanham
is like an autumn wind rippling
through corn tassels down in the bottom-land,
pagan like the song Eve wooed Adam with.

When Silas plays the fiddle
the men folk think of lean hounds
and the beady eyes of a possum by torch-light.
The women folk think of blue-eyed babies
and countless nursery rhymes.

The fiddle when played by Silas Lanham
is like a thousand crickets
gone mad in Junetime.

—Madison Wood

GOD SAVE THE BEAUTIFUL

The plain of melancholy
haunts his hallowed walk of sand
from the reach of a peaks upmost
a book of Wordsworth
to the breast
he pities small fish beneath
and a grim sail
that fans distantly
the far horizons bleak beyond
as an alone bird
in the scream
of a wild wind's uproar
fails against the hurld waves
frothed in a rush of
fright
God grant him
pillared oaks
with the plush of fields green
to walk among.

—Madison Wood

SNOW

The ceremonial snow has fallen twice today,
An unsought benison upon the poor.
It shrouds their awkward yards and alleyways,
The hoveled buildings that offend our gaze—
The city's rotting core.
Each crystal more beautifies.
Strange, they do not rush outside to raise
Their hands in the encircling storm
As Russian peasants in an ancient portrait.
Here hungry only huddle where it's warm.
Cherishing fire in barrels, broken stoves.
Babies and kittens cry against the wind
Knowing that spring is very far behind.

ADELAIDE S. SIMON

LEGACY

What desperate nightmare enraps me to this land
 Lit by a bloody moon, blood on the hills,
 Blood in the valleys ? Why am I compelled
 To tread again where buried feet have trod,
 To shed by tears where blood and tears have flowed ?
 Compulsion of the blood and of the moon
 Transports. I was moulded from this clay.
 My blood must ransom all the blood shed here,
 My tears redeem the tears, Cripples and monsters
 Are here. My flesh must make them whole and hale.
 I am the sacrifice.

See where the halt
 Attempt again and again to cross a line
 Their minds have drawn, but fear snatches them back
 Though health and joy wait on the other side.
 And there another locks himself in a room
 And throws away the key. A ragged scarecrow
 Cackles an antique lay, and cries himself
 King of the world. A naked plowman stoops
 Idle upon the plow, and overhead
 A lean bird circles.

—Dudley Randall

TOMORROWS

Death—superlative is
 evoked by a venomous cup of nectar
 forced into the blood stream of a preconceived
 victim,
 who, saturated with baths of illusion,
 drinks as a vicarious escape from precocious
 lethargy !
 Reality fights its way from a subconscious
 prison—heroically
 demanding conception, too late.
 Poured by adept—intangible hands, the drugged
 fluid, like a swift
 current labouring under the impact of a wrathful
 storm,
 advances into every crevice of the victim's body
 enslaving
 nerves, cells, tissues, with paralytic perfection—
 leaving only a vacuum of flesh dilated with a
 siren of yesterdays, screaming—
 No room for tomorrows.
 With muscles, taut from inhibitions, sadistic
 pleasure of static conventions ;
 messengers of the nervous system, harnessed to
 the vacuum of flesh
 dilated with a siren of yesterdays—
 telegraph only one message now—
 No room for tomorrows !

—E. Deloris McLemore

WHAT SHALL I FIND IN THE MORN

What shall I find in the morn ?
Shall I find only
Another dawn shadowing vapid dreams ?
Shall I find another day of harvest reaping
only frustrated desires ?
Shall I find once more a spirited sun
chased into oblivion
by a doleful cloud ?
Shall I find a calm stream shaken into turbulence
by a torrent of rain ?
Shall I find no end to endless storms—?
What shall I ——
What shall I find in the morn ?

—E. Deloris McLemore

THE BLIND MAN

He never saw the sky
Or the noon-day sun,
He never saw the rain
Or the morning dew,
He never saw the sea
Or the ships that sail it,
He never saw his home
Or the place he was born,
But he thanks God
That he was born,
And for the blessings
Bestowed upon him,
And for letting him hear
The laughter of his friends,
And feel the patter of rain
Against his face,
And the tears of all his
Sorrows and joys.

—Paul Forrest Gould

THE EDGE OF SATURDAY

Brains genuflect on Saturday nights
 before the stork-like stance
 of fragile, repetitious glass.
 Latter hours are wavy-eyed,
 bright liquid starches
 slender bones that ache.

Short-reigning kings, hiccoughing,
 paw the fetid air ;
 paper crowns askew.
 And queens, bewitching,
 nod the proper spots.
 The world's a kissing place
 in camouflage.

The breaking Sabbath
 unrolls with loathing
 against the decimal points
 of prodding day.
 The edge of Saturday
 rides weekly carrouseis,
 slots bulging dream for ring—
 and grins its secret knowledge.

—Dorothy Dalton

O, STONE MOTHER

O, stone mother
 of the often dreamed
 you are my oneness—
 abandoned in this new place
 my mirror goes blind.

O, stone mother
 sealed in brown boundaries,
 I lean against your used to be
 in the morbid night
 Out on the plains of day
 I rideameleon-like
 through altering time.

Loss without prelude
 burns with firstness
 into the tender knowing part.
 Only flesh in tears
 moans across the new months—
 the new time—new with loss.

—Dorothy Dalton

LOOK TO THE LEFT EYE

Look to the left eye
 the other is bald with watching.
 Moves are scheduled
 by the trigger brain
 feasting on its last successes.
 Twilight inching
 casts sardonic shadows
 on the pale heads.
 The judges stretch long beards
 and flex toothless gums
 for further waiting time.
 Look again—
 look to the left eye
 it tells the truth—
 and tells it silently.

—Dorothy Dalton

GREEN DUST

Young leaves fallen limp sucked
by parasites
become
Dried leaves, wilted, faded to be
trodden :
Crushed leaves wearied from
brazen fermentation,
are
souls robbed of timed fruition
Powdered to green dust
Oh ! cruel rulers !
in God's graveyard.

—Rose Davis Greene

THE GREAT GAME

Duke Glenn came to in the bizarre surroundings of a dark tent. He recognized the feel of the hard mat under his body, and slowly his eyes opened wider until he could see a gray opening at the end of the rectangle of canvas and rope. Twisting his head he discerned in the dimness other blanketed hulks on cold wooden cots that rowed each side of the tent. Trying to raise himself he found it impossible! He was tied down! A hospital, he thought. The Commies must have won that battle up there. He remembered losing consciousness when he felt a searing pain in his right side. Slowly he slid his left hand across his abdomen feeling for a bandage. It was there, but there was no pain. Had he really been hit?

Suddenly there was an agonizing scream from the hulk two cots from Duke's. A helpless, piteous scream that tore at the heart.

"Oh! Oh! Eee-aahhee-e-e!"

Duke felt cold sweat pop out all over him! He shuddered.

"Oh! Oh! Aheee-e-Aheee-e-e!"

"Hey, somebody!" Duke called, "Somebody come help this man!"

"It's no use, fella. They don't come 'til it gets light in here," said a drawling voice from the opposite side of the enclosure. "They go to better quarters so they can get a good night's sleep."

"How long—we been here?"

"You and the 'scream' over there only since yesterday. The rest of us since 'Operation Zero.'"

"We're all wounded?"

"Yeah. Most of us got compounds and we get no medical aid either."

"Who are—our—helpers?" Duke's breath giving out on him was his only sign so far of weakness. "See—any of them?"

The scream rent the tent again.

"Yeah, they all look alike, color of the Mississippi at high water season, and them demoniac black eyes that look right through you with no concern for your agony. Just a few male medics and sentries. I'm an amputee and my worse times are just before a rain."

"Boy, I feel for you, then, 'cause it was coming down like the Horseshoe at Niagara when I got it out there. You say it was—yesterday?"

"Yeah. It was still at it when they brought you boys in here looking like drowned rats, but it let up in the night. Hope the sun'll come up with the dawn. What's your name, fella?"

"Duke Glenn. Yours?"

"Ted Barwell. You sound like the colored boy they gave up for dead."

The scream was smothered into a shuddering moan.

The voices halted until it stopped. There were tears sounding in the next utterance.

"Guess so—but I wasn't that bad was I? Wish I wasn't so weak so I could move myself."

As they talked Ted's hope materialized, for a glimmer of rose

tinted the grayness of the opening at the end of the tent.

"Look, Ted, sunshine!"

"Yeah, now I'd be happier if they'd come and see about your buddy over there!"

By now the hulks on other cots were becoming alive. A yawn here and there. An arm thrashing about on an askew blanket. Some sat upright, throwing back blankets that revealed they were chained to the beds by the ankle.

Duke lay quiet now, thinking. He had seen evidence of great suffering here, and yet he was in no great pain. Why?

Suddenly a shadow dimmed the sunlit opening. A group of little men marched down the aisles pouring some white slushy substance into tin pans and placed them on the bamboo stools beside each cot with a brick-like lump beige pastry beside it.

"You cannot eat yet." One moved to his side whispered in fair English, pointing at his wound.

He moved two cots over. Looking down on the whiteness of that face, he motioned toward the opening, and two more men trotted in with a stretcher. They struggled the hulk on to it and staggered hastily out.

A hush fell on the group denoting the fate of the body that moved past them on the litter.

While the rest ate another litter returned and carried Duke out in silence. They crossed the road to a bamboo building with him.

"O.K., G.I.," the same little Korean spoke to him again. "You now in efficient medical hands. They continue patch you up. Soon you be good as new! Already you had miracle serum in side."

Duke noticed that plasma was being given to patients here, and with modern hospital treatment. Another odd, and noticeable thing, was the absence of fair skinned patients in this lot.

So, mused Duke, some kind of high powered drug had been put on his side to deaden the pain!

"You must be amazed at what you see here, but don't be. It is only the way the others have played this game for centuries, with your kind and my kind, forced to play on the unfavored team. Not always the losers, but charged so by trickery. Now we show them how it feels to be the unfavored opponent, with the very tactics they taught us!"

Duke thought of the wanton suffering he had just left across the muddy road, and felt a deep pang of sorrow and helplessness surge through him. He wondered if any earthly power could help his fellow countrymen win this half.

"A game," he muttered half aloud, "Yeah, a big game!" Just then a tan almond-eyed medic started to give him the anesthesia. As he sank into peaceful oblivion, his one thought floated down with him. When would that single shot ending the last quarter be fired?

—Cleota Augustus

SEA SONG

How I loved them !
 The sunburst sands of windy beaches ;
 And the frothy finger tips of waves
 Scratching the damp sand
 Into hilly mounds and patterns.

Tugging dead sea-things
 Back into the mother-ocean.
 Washing dead life
 Clean of Death.
 Obedient only to the moon.

—Mary Godfrey

THE SONG

I saw him singing on a hill
 In the solitude of memory.
 Yet I am sure he knows
 The silence of a dying rose ;
 ——the quietness of love.

I think that if I walked
 beyond this hill,
 I would find another forest
 just as still ;
 ——just as full of memories.

And he would be there too ;
 Without the song.
 But I would stand alone.
 Waiting for a rose to die,
 And clothe a hill of stone.

—Mary Godfrey

NOTES ON NEGRO POETS

(See : Hughes and Bontemps, *Poetry of the Negro*)

1

I cannot make heads or tails
 of the new poets among Negroes.
 But then why bother ?
 Could anything be made of them
 would it matter ?
 But some say that they
 cannot make heads or tails
 of ME ! How can that be ?
 I am so clear ! not like
 Gwendolyn Brooks—
 all blear.

2

Or take Margaret Walker
 ' Old Molly Means ' or rather
 lets leave her. I can't
 take her at all—
 or those cadences
 " For Her People."

3

Negroes, Freedom, etc., in poetry !
 (a word dear reader ;
 they weary). Many frowns and all
 pass over them mysterious,
 and some die over them,
 and I—I've been so heroic—
 I've sighed over them.

4

Ah Negro poetry where perfect sham
 is passing ! " Pounds of passion "
 in a war of metaphors !
 Some similies, that, for all
 I see, have no relation
 to the thought
 (of which, I suppose,
 there is nought).

5

I'll tell you when I'm crushed
 by books—when I read
 Gwendolyn Brooks !
 I don't mean to be terse
 But its unsavory verse.
 A flag " a pretty glory "
 " a merry softness " stuck
 in a " pound of passion ".
 Really, its " dear defiance "
 of something or other
 (those metaphors perhaps
 all thrown together).
 " Against her power
 crumpled and wan "
 means something, lets hope.
 To me it means that
 she should not go on.

6

" How like the consummation of " too much
 Are the poems of Robert Hayden
 With too many big words laden.

7

When I think of Countee Cullen
 I grow sullen. He wrote
 little to " stand " at all.
 " On These " he falls.
 He marvelled at that
 curious thing, you know ;
 they " bade him sing "
 He should have marvelled
 that no one bade him
 cease ! He could not
 hold his peace,
 John Keats.

8

I am thinking of that " Powerful Long Ladder "
 If it is the " Bird of Freedom "
 (too much freedom, Mr. Dodson)
 lets hope he's caught soon now
 before more mixed up metaphors
 are wrought
 " Terror does not belong to open day "
 (nor such poetry by the way)
 " Merry-ro merry-ro "
 (to an asylum lets go)
 " Why are the flowers on the trees so white ? "
 I needn't quote anymore of that professor's
 He is the bore of bores.

9

You know how sensitive I am and all
 and cannot bear writers ungeneral—
 Realists and so on ? How they do bore !
 because there are not a few of them
 but a few *more* !

—Russell Atkins

THE ABORTIONIST

(a poem in play form
to be set to music)

(SCENE: *A basement room in a half deserted building in a deteriorated, dark, old section of downtown in a large city.*)

DR. DRASSAKAR

(on phone)

Dr. Drassakar. Well. Miss Harrington. You're late.

I'm all ready. Near here you say? Then watch.

There are the down steps. Then a door.

Recall the bell? Once here ring the bell.

Don't neglect the bell. It tells me it is you.

Good. Come quickly Miss Harrington

(he hangs up)

Were she Dr. Harrington himself

Other first-staged beforehand

Would rear me to the occasion!

(he then addresses small mice in a cage sticking small pieces of cheese into the cage)

At last we take-the-lamps-from.

(Drassakar then applies himself to the preparation for the visit of his patient. He rolls a battered operating table behind apparatus in a corner of the room under a light. This position obscures the table all but the head. He draws out of bag various instruments. He does this and more with a rather wild air about him. He is contemplating a hypodermic needle when there comes a ringing of a little bell. He grows ruthlessly active. Unlocks the door, then hurriedly seats himself behind desk. There is a knock.)

DR. DRASSAKAR

Come in Miss Harrington.

(Enter Cecilia Harrington. Wears black face hidden somewhat behind collar. Young. Nervous.)

Sit down Miss Harrington

And why do you tremble?

Let me help you—your coat—

(rises to assist)

MISS HARRINGTON

No no. I won't take long Dr., for I—

That is—I well—I

Have something to tell.

It's of—we understand,

My decision?—you see—

That is—I mean—

DR. DRASSAKAR

This is but nerves I say.

For now relax Miss Harrington

The instrument's temporarily

off'key'd.

Talk of something—
Grow calm and—

MISS HARRINGTON

Hear me Dr.! our plan's
A fang through me.

DR. DRASSAKAR

Ah now Miss Harrington listen :
Don't let the commonplace
Distress you. Remember, my dear,
These days strain you.
I say then look to a beyond
Of cheer. Vision the unspoiled,
The beautiful, the rose-of.
You have listened to talk.
Listen, however, to a man
Who knows ; who had as a
Master of it, of ruins
Lifted Again ; to disgrace given mask ;
To no more afforded more ;
To discords the resolutions
Found.

MISS HARRINGTON

Dr., of course ! You only
Meant to help. I know,
For I came to you at will.
I am thinking of father.
It will be a Lisbon horror
To him ; the Vesuvius
To crush his at-heart
For me ! To tell mother
I'm to have a child,
To tell her that, for all,
I have no husband—
That he was without—
Without honor, will
Make stone of her.
How shall I say—?

DR. DRASSAKAR

Miss Harrington no fear
Of that have no fear.
Just don't say of course !
You have attended my counsel ?
Hush will be hooded
Over it. Only you and I
Will know that Cecilia Harrington
Was to have a child.

CECILIA HARRINGTON

This you don't know—my decision—
I will have the child—
Dr.—

DR. DRASSAKAR

Will have it ?

CECILIA HARRINGTON

I passed Highland Glades-Upon-Wicks.
It sat stoned up in that Blank.
I commiserated passing.
Was I not responsible
More than to myself ? Should I
Respond to the honor ?
I have always wanted a child Dr.
It waited to love, I thought. I
Smoothed my hand on it.
In a grim sudden Dr
A death was more-of.

DR. DRASSAKAR

Miss Harrington such sentiments
Oppress me.

You, young and
Beautiful, the gem of
A generation and a father
Famous throughout, surely,
You think how propitious
The universe is—All is. Ha !
Miss Harrington, don't be hasty
Nine shadows of a year
And this texture of yours
Vanishes.

(he rises abruptly)
Bruted about, dilated,
Swined in the sty—

CECILIA HARRINGTON

Dr. I—I—

DR. DRASSAKAR

You don't want that
Miss Harrington.

CECILIA HARRINGTON

You must listen—

DR. DRASSAKAR

You can't mean else.

(places himself against door)

CECILIA HARRINGTON

You don't understand. I forbid—

DR. DRASSAKAR

You forbid it do you !

CECILIA HARRINGTON

Do you ask for money ?
Here tonight ? You've assorted, readied
Undertaken. Oh forgive me !
Thoughts have built up a
Pillar of me. This terrible thing !
I won't think more of it.

DR. DRASSAKAR

Did I mention money ?

CECILIA HARRINGTON

Are you detaining me Dr.?

DR. DRASSAKAR

Hoping to exact a debt

I thought of you.

You will pay ?

CECILIA HARRINGTON

Tell me the cost.

DR. DRASSAKAR

In money Cecilia Harrington ?

In pain !

(locks door. She reaches for it)

What's to be said for you ?

Be calm. Do not resist.

(he seizes her)

CECILIA HARRINGTON

Dr.—!

DR. DRASSAKAR

Sit down !

CECILIA HARRINGTON

You're a madman !

DR. DRASSAKAR

So you would slander the Dr.?

(he forces her into a chair ; he lifts a glass from the table containing a liquid)

Miss Harrington drink this, will you ?

(forces her to drink)

This will incapacitate you,

Of course.

(pause)

(Cecilia Harrington her head held in her hands)

Consider yourself my patient,

Will you ? What of patients ? I

Remember some recovered ;

Paid the bill ; Conversed with

others similar. Dogs !

What a low of conditions !

I hated them.

(C. Harrington, head yet in hands)

Miss Harrington can you hear me ?

I'm scorpioned for revenge.

So you shall feel it sharp

Violating the sanctum.

(Dr. Drassakar bears her to the table across the room. There he proceeds in a violent manner to tear off her clothes.)

Lie beautifully corpsed, will you ?

That is assume the cadaver of him.

Ten years in debt Miss Harrington !

The interest's just short of

Death. Let me tell you of

The debt of your father,

How yearly it changes a season in me !

NIGHT WATCHMAN

Yes, well that is—

(Cecilia Harrington thrashes on table. Gives a short cry.)

What's happening in there Dr.?

(Drassakar hurries over to C. Harrington. Attempts to stifle her. Struggle. The sound of things falling. She gasps. Short screams. Drassakar strikes her to floor. Knocking on door insistent.)

Dr. Drassakar! Dr. Drassakar!

(She is writhing on floor. Bust and head visible)

Dr. Drassakar!

(He pounds the door. The pounding stops. Dr. Drassakar listens toward the door. Cecilia Harrington moans)

(Drassakar turns. His eye catches sight of the fetus. He proceeds to lift Cecilia Harrington up from the floor behind the table. Seizing the sheet from the table he wraps it around her shroud-like. She is faintly protesting. Places her in arm chair on full stage. Blood colors the winding sheet)

DR. DRASSAKAR

You are a mother Miss Harrington.

(clothes fetus in a cloth, thrusts it at her)

What when the newspapers tell the story!

Sit up here girl! Falling about won't help.

Madonna of the Chair! Look up! Ugh!

You're impossible!

Here is the child. It's too bad

Harrington can't see you. I laugh at you!

Harrington will hate it!

(footsteps)

They promise the police!

Madonna of the Chair!

(there is a hurried sound of about five men. Their voices are confused. Drassakar stark)

NIGHT WATCHMAN

In here!

(terrific pounding)

(Cecilia Harrington slumps dead in the chair. Fetus falls to the floor)

VOICE I

Open up in there!

(terrific pounding)

DR. DRASSAKAR

You can't save her!

(Drassakar hurries to Cecilia. Examines her)

NIGHT WATCHMAN

I have brought the Law, Dr. Drassakar!

VOICE II

Let's break it in.

(There is a crash against the door)

NIGHT WATCHMAN

Again

DR. DRASSAKAR

(leaning over Cecilia Harrington)

Dead.

(curtain begins to close slowly)

(the door weakens)

(Drassakar retreats. Picks up knife. Door falls open. They face each other. They advance. Suddenly Drassakar rushes upon them. There is a shot. Drassakar falls among them as they bear him to the floor.)

—Russell Atkins

WAY-STATION OFF PERNAMBUCO

The news of dawn is as fast as dawn
the birds herald it as they herald
the birth of spring or the birth of an egg

The egg is void for all its yolk
the dawn is void even in thunder
the day is birthed from a withered hag

The eye is mid-wife, the ear
they wait upon the creaking heron
flapping through the reeking bog

Her body is lax after gripping terror
the fever is quiet in the ridden marrow
her kimona slips from a withered dug.

—Judson Crews

THE PINK CHAMBER'S PRIVACY

A man's problem is a thing so simple
the world is simple which he moves in
a man's world, simple world

Man's choice in this simple world
must according to all rules be a simple choice
of ties : the green one or the purple
of footwear : the Jodphurs or the English boots
Man's simple choices in a man's simple world

But this is the complication
this O complicated female in the male's
simple world
she would ride the world or break it
and break it
she must

She would move the wind as well as the
furniture
this complicated female in man's simple world

He built it simple but he built her too
and he built her too much
this is the complication
she was simple too too simple
for this man's simple simple world

—Judson Crews

OVER LIFE-SIZE

Time melts like a tired candle
the stale wax dribbling awry

This point in history
is its point of flame

This flame penetrates slightly
beyond the tip of the nose

Another rivulette spreads to right
as the hot wind turns

Now it wavers, gutters
the sleep-walkers are in terror

Lest time burn out they quake
fearing void, the only eucharist.

—Judson Crews

TIMING

Let us
return to those high
disciplines that are
the nerve's slowness.
Death to the frenetic
electric-cornered
motions of mind. Raze
the jagged tin
structures of haste.

And like intelligent whales
we will wallow in that substance
which the seal of Hart Crane
set at a distance.

Let us
like a nerveless cat
stalk our subject
whether or not
it really has
the body of a woman
and afterward
eat well.

—W. S. Allen

THE WITCH

The sexual cavities of her body
are like the caves of Hades where she lingers
and where, without particular absorption,
small blue dilemmas grow, drinking her milk.
She is the cause of rot when apple seeds
would otherwise expand themselves into
cool malic acids for the inner mind.
She is the heat, but not of the Bahamas
in heaviest azure summer, she is the heat
of evil that allows us not even
the sandy-cool and sweet exhilaration
decomposition brings. Let us kill her
daily with the industry of steelworkers
who through red furnace gates thrust a
new spear.

Be this our combat. After centuries
God may grant us her body, wholly dead.

—W. S. Allen

THE TORNADO

Spirals from the dust
a tiny stem of wind ;
grows, coiling and weaving,
feeds its vacuum spout with dirt,
spinning papers, sucks up
birds, insects, dry leaves ; stronger
now cording to a twisted finger
pointing disaster ; snatches trees
by the roots, hurls branches like darts ;
howls fury, roars, puffs up houses to explode,
scattering the people and their furniture
to anonymity ; screams for power, scoops up
lonely freight cars, autos ; makes playthings
out of heavy steel ; gleefully jungles " I " beams
of lumber and heaped coal, shuffles them
on to the northeast.

Seconds later, when the dark, bubbling
cumulus clouds have boiled away, and the
calmness of death returns in retching rain,
the pale survivors crawl out from their
broken temples of self-worship to see
if there is still a sky.

—Helen Johnson Collins

In this issue—

The issue editor, *Casper LeRoy Jordan* is chief librarian at Wilberforce (Ohio) University, and is chairman of the prose section . . . *Adelaide Simon* is connected with the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, an amateur horticulturist and folk singer . . . *Madison Wood* has appeared in *Free Lance* before his "When Played by Silas Lanham" was the winner of the regional and national awards . . . this marks the debut of *Dudley Randall* of Lincoln University, Jefferson City, Missouri . . . *Rose Davis Greene* is a composer-choreographer and has appeared before . . . *Cleota Augustus* is represented by *Free Lance's* first prose publication . . . the experimentalist *Russell Atkins* has appeared before, and is no stranger to those who regularly read the little magazines . . . *Mary Godfrey* is a student at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts . . . *Dorothy Dalton* is a native of New York City and has appeared in over fifty magazines and newspapers, and is working on a full length poem now . . . *W. S. Allen* lives in New York City and Florida, has poems in *Goad*, *Inferno*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Pavement*, first novel being typed . . . *Helen Johnson Collins* is chairman of the poetry section of *Free Lance, Inc.* and a librarian . . . *E. Deloris McLemore* is a native of West Virginia and an assistant librarian at West Virginia State College . . . *Paul Forrest Gould* is a resident of Massachusetts and this is his first appearance in *Free Lance* . . . *Judson Crews* is a prolific poet and publisher.